



# National Congress Bulletin

FEBRUARY 1954 PUBLISHED BY THE NATIONAL CONGRESS OF PARENTS AND TEACHERS • CHICAGO 5 • VOL. 21, NO. 6

*Dear P. T. A. Presidents:*

WHO has watched a loved child at play and not thought anxiously, "What will the world do to him?" Who has looked into eyes shining with delight and not longed to keep them laughing always? Who has felt a warm, confiding little hand slip into his, mutely asking guidance, and not felt a fierce determination to be worthy of the trust?

Always the helplessness of little children has clutched at human hearts and stirred the desire for a kinder, better world—for a world without the evil that changes the laughter in a child's eyes to a suspicious gleam, turns the soft hand into a clenched fist, or thrusts into the hand a gun or grenade.

More than half a century ago Alice McLellan Birney, looking on the newborn infant at her side, created in her imagination a new world—as other mothers have. It was such a world, she tells us, "as it seemed to me might be a reality if each newborn soul might enter into life in a happy, uplifting environment." But Mrs. Birney did more than dream of a new world in which children would be assured of their birthright of human dignity and happiness. As a means toward that end she envisioned a great organization, and on February 17, 1897, with the help of Phoebe Apperson Hearst, she brought that organization—our National Congress—into being.

To work toward that "happy, uplifting environment" was a heroic venture conceived by heroic people. It meant changing homes, schools, and communities; it meant changing people's attitudes. It meant replacing ignorance with enlightenment, neglect with care. It meant replacing the selfishness that exploited children with the love that protected them. It meant self-education, public education, legislation, cooperation with other organizations. It meant action on every front and at every level—local, state, and national. It still does.

But the united power of many persons, loving and caring persons, works

miracles. The history of the activities of our Congress is a record of social and educational progress in America. Juvenile courts, laws for juvenile protection, child labor laws, safety legislation, public kindergartens and playgrounds, school bus transportation, school lunches, dental clinics, health examinations, better school buildings, better school programs—these are some of the achievements to which the Congress, its state branches, and its local units have made a substantial contribution.

Impressive as these gains are, much remains to be done. Some of our tasks are recurring or continuing ones; others are new. In every generation children must be helped to work out their relationship to their fellow men, to the world in which they live, to their Creator. In every generation parents must be helped to guide them. Educational programs and home-school cooperation must be continually improved.

Out of research centers and libraries and into our minds, the P.T.A. will continue to bring its members new findings about human behavior, to help build more truly humane relationships in the home and the community.

The basic concerns of our Founders continue to be our concerns. As in the past, our work will be accomplished not only through the national and state congresses but by our local units. The task that lies nearest at hand is the task of the local unit. Your current programs and projects are parent-teacher history in the making.

The good-will offering that we make on Founders Day is used to expand and improve parent-teacher work. Its specific uses are detailed in the 1954 Founders Day pamphlet, page 18. Do your members know about this extension work, as it is called? If they do, I am sure they will want to share, through a gift, in the expansion of our great caring, working organization. The parent-teacher movement is a means through which men and women can

## OUR FOUNDERS



Alice McLellan Birney



Phoebe Apperson Hearst

channel their good intentions into good works for children and youth.

The new national home into which we shall move this year will enable us to meet the demands of our growing numbers and our expanding services. To it we shall bring our heritage from our Founders—a deep and abiding concern for all children everywhere. We shall enter it with a dedication to the future. And we know, as Bonaro Overstreet has said, that "the future is a child with laughing eyes."

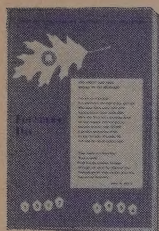
Loyally yours,

*Sucille P. Leonard*

MRS. NEWTON P. LEONARD, President  
National Congress of Parents and Teachers



## 1954 Founders Day Pamphlet



On October 21, 1953, we mailed 35,411 copies of the Founders Day pamphlet direct to the local presidents whose names and addresses were then on file at the National Office. Two days later, on October 23, we supplied an additional 20,720 to the state congresses for use within the states and to give to local presidents who did not get copies from the National Office. We also mailed ten copies to each of the fifty state Founders Day chairmen. If your association failed to receive the free copy to which it is entitled, please write immediately to your state office for one.

### Included in the Contents:

Founders Day Message  
 Suggestions for Founders Day Programs  
 P.T.A. Action Through the Years  
*We Rekindle Our Faith* (A Candlelighting Ceremony)  
*Light for Tomorrow* (A Pageant)  
 Brief Biographical Sketches of Our Founders  
 Dedication (A Poem)  
 Our March of Events (A Play)  
 Publicity Hints  
 Birthday Cake Ceremony for Founders Day  
 102 Years Ago  
 Music for Founders Day

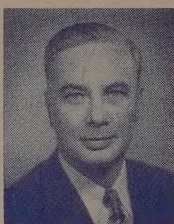
### A Daughter's Gift

Eleven-year-old Mary Hope Bronson of Corpus Christi, Texas, isn't a parent-teacher member yet, but she showed her enthusiasm for the P.T.A. in an unusual way last November. At the annual convention of the Texas Congress she arranged to have a state life membership presented to her mother, Mrs. Jack Bronson, in the name of her father, herself, and the David Hirsch P.T.A. Mary Hope saved the money herself in a piggy bank and then presented it to Mrs. Faye Parnell, membership chairman of the unit. Surprised and elated at the gift, Mrs. Bronson said she thought her daughter had been saving all those nickels and dimes for Christmas.

## NOMINATED FOR NATIONAL OFFICES



Kenneth Oberholtzer



Joseph A. Hunter



Mrs. R. Lawrence

• Five national officers will be elected at the annual convention at Atlantic City, New Jersey, May 24-26. The following list of nominees has been presented by the nominating committee of the National Congress:

*Second vice-president*, Kenneth E. Oberholtzer, Denver, Colorado

*Vice-president from Region I*, Mrs. Ramon Lawrence, Jericho, Vermont

*Vice-president from Region II*, Joseph A. Hunter, Baltimore, Maryland

*Vice-president from Region IV*, Mrs. T. H. Ludlow, Riverside, Illinois

*Vice-president from Region VI*, Mrs. H. G. Stinnett, Jr., Plainview, Texas

Each of the candidates has accepted the nomination, and each is well qualified to serve the Congress in a post of great responsibility.

Members of the nominating committee are Mrs. Edward T. Walker, California, chairman; John S. Carroll, Texas; Mrs. Harry E. King, Michigan; Mrs. Albert Solomon, Colorado; and Mrs. James J. Walker, Rhode Island.



Mrs. T. H. Ludlow



Mrs. H. G. Stinnett, Jr.

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 6. The Words of Our Hearts.....Bonaro W. Overstreet  
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## CONVENTION NEWS

Among the participants scheduled to speak at the national convention of the National Congress at Atlantic City, New Jersey, May 24-26, are:

**Henry Steele Commager**, distinguished historian and author of many notable studies of American political life, including *Majority Rule and Minority Rights*.

**Nelson A. Rockefeller**, undersecretary of the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare.

**William A. Early**, president of the National Education Association.

**Benjamin Cohen**, assistant secretary-general of the United Nations in charge of public information.

**Theodore M. Greene**, professor of philosophy at Yale University.

Headquarters for the convention will be the Ambassador Hotel, situated on the boardwalk. Rates there are as follows: single rooms, \$5.00-\$14.00; double rooms, \$8.00-\$18.00; suites, \$20.00-\$36.00.

Across the street from the Ambassador, and also fronting the boardwalk, is the Ritz-Carlton, which has the following rates: single rooms, \$6.00-\$8.00; double rooms, \$8.00-\$16.00; suites, \$25.00-\$50.00.

Delegates who wish to stay at the headquarters hotel or at the Ritz-Carlton should write their state conference office for an official application form, fill it in, and return it to the hotel of their choice.



The Ambassador and Ritz-Carlton hotels.

## NATIONAL CONGRESS BULLETIN

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## EDITORIAL STAFF OF THE NATIONAL CONGRESS OF PARENTS AND TEACHERS

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## Administration Projects

Assistant editor: Mrs. Cora G. Barron.

## REPORT FROM ROME

• Mrs. Newton P. Leonard, our national president, is one of a group of 8 persons who were selected to go overseas to observe the distribution of U.S. packages to thousands of Europe's needy families. In selecting Mrs. Leonard for this important mission, the Foreign Operations Administration of our government has signally honored the National Congress of Parents and Teachers and each of its 38,500 parent-teacher associations. Indeed every parent-teacher officer and chairman—national, state, and local—as well as each of our 7,953,806 members, can take justifiable pride in this honor, made possible by their achievements on behalf of child welfare.

Mrs. Leonard was flown to Rome, Italy, early in December. She was there during the Christmas holidays, and on the day before Christmas she wrote to all of us as follows:

"Rome looks 'Christmasy.' Christmas trees, holly, mistletoe, and poinsettia plants are abundant. Stores do not carry as much decoration as ours do, but everywhere there is some. Santa Claus of all shapes and sizes appear in the most unusual places. Tomorrow is a religious holiday. January 6 will be the children's day for receiving gifts.

"Our three days in Naples were busy and interesting and at times heart-rending. It was very touching to see the children come up to receive the packages of food. The first packages were distributed by a cardinal and an admiral, and then four men from the U.S. military personnel passed out the others. I wish you could have seen the embarrassment of those boys when the little children insisted on kissing their hands as they gave each youngster a gift from his friends in the United States. As we left, three little girls came rushing up to thank me and to give me a calendar!

"When one sees the unbelievably wretched quarters where some people live and the thousands of orphans, infirm, and aged, one realizes that even these millions of pounds of food can bring only temporary relief. Their greatest values will be those of good will and friendship. By sharing our surplus food with these needy thousands, we are building bridges of understanding that

will hasten the day when peace on earth will be a reality.

"Yesterday we went to a settlement house run by Congregational missions. It is situated in a most destitute area. More than twenty thousand persons were brought in from caves. Old warehouses were used to house them, four or five families to a so-called room. Thousands are living in huts among dumps and ruins. The joy of these people as they came to get the food packages was pathetic. The mission is doing a superb job, but it is tragic to think that they can feed and care for so comparatively few. The previous day the children had received a 'bundle' containing a toy as well as one article of clothing. One little boy in tattered rags was wearing a pair of bright red mittens, obviously new and very obviously the pride of his life. A little girl clutched a small doll, so precious to her that she kept it covered with a little piece of an old blanket!

"A guide on one of our observation trips was a naval officer from Maine. His wife had been my daughter's nurse at one time when she was hospitalized there. The world can indeed be small!

"We leave Rome on Sunday for Leghorn, or Livorno, stay overnight there to observe an army distribution of food on Monday. Then back to Rome by train that afternoon. We expect to be in Naples again on December 30 and in Palermo on January 4. From there we probably will go to the Calabria region for several days.

"As I said before, this is a tremendous experience. When I see at first hand the plight of these good people and the discouragements they face daily, I appreciate more fully than ever before the blessings that are ours as citizens of the United States. In accepting this honor on your behalf, I felt that I had a patriotic duty to perform. I am trying to discharge it in a manner that will be worthy of your commendation."

MAY 24, 1954

National convention opens  
in Atlantic City, New Jersey





• Mrs. John E. Hayes  
National Chairman, Founders  
Day Committee



• Mrs. Leonard and her grandchildren (left to right):  
Kathy Jewell, Nina Lee Jewell, Ruth Ann Sloan, and  
Stephen Jewell.



• Mr. Walker, Knox, Jr., and Mrs. Walker (see p. 8).



• Mrs. Fatland and her grandchildren. From left to right: John Eric  
Borg, Tamara Lue Fatland, Grandmother Fatland, Kathy Lue Borg, and  
Paul Borg.

## WHY WE

### • A Founders Day Feature

• "Wouldn't it be interesting to know why Mrs. Leonard joined the P.T.A.?" "Do you suppose we could get Mr. Walker to tell us sometime what it was that drew him into the P.T.A.?" These and similar speculations were overheard by the Founders Day chairman, Mrs. John E. Hayes, at various national and state conventions, so it seemed most reasonable to build this Founders Day feature on such natural, friendly curiosity about when and where our leaders first started their P.T.A. work.

The idea was well thought of, and she proceeded to get the information. It took a little while, though, to persuade our officers to write these human interest stories. Like many good people who have been elected to positions of outstanding leadership, they didn't want "to talk about themselves." But Mrs. Hayes persevered because she was confident that what they had to tell would be inspiring to other parent-teacher members. Therefore it is with great pleasure that we present this feature in the Founders Day issue of the "National Congress Bulletin," together with several informal pictures of the officers and their children or grandchildren.

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### OAK LEAVES FOR LITTLE LUCILLE

"Mother, I need you and Daddy to put leaves on our tree," our older daughter, Lucille, announced one November evening many years ago. A few questions enlightened us. In every schoolroom, we learned, there was a P.T.A. tree, and as a child's parents joined the association the child put leaves on the tree to symbolize their membership. A written message from the P.T.A. invited us to join and urged us also to attend an open house at the school the following Tuesday evening, in observance of American Education Week. We willingly, if ignorantly, sent the requested membership fee.

Every evening the week before the open house Lucille excitedly described progress on preparations for the event. On this blackboard, she reported, would be her cutout of a ship; on that desk,



# JOINED THE P.T.A.

**By the Officers of the National  
Congress of Parents and Teachers**

her latest drawing. Every conversation ended with the exultant announcement, "And you'll meet my teacher. She's the nicest person!"

Of course, Mr. Leonard and I went. We saw the displays; we met the "nice" teacher; we were introduced to other parents; and we learned about the P.T.A. We discovered that it was a state and national organization, and we began to sense slightly the meaning and significance of the all-inclusive membership indicated on our membership cards.

This was our introduction to home-school relationships and their importance to the child. Here we had our first glimpse into the vast possibilities of home and school cooperation. Here we first heard the clarion call to build better homes, better schools, and better communities for all children everywhere.

—MRS. NEWTON P. LEONARD, *President*

## IN THE PRE-BUS ERA

Today I live thirty minutes from Des Moines. A generation ago, in the "Pre-bus and Paved Road Era," this trip consumed half a day. The train or the interurban took you to the city, and after that you used the streetcar.

One day in that long ago, the Des Moines paper carried an announcement that impelled me to make this tedious trip. Dr. Bird T. Baldwin of the Iowa Child Welfare Research Station of Iowa City, the paper said, was to give a talk at the Des Moines City Library on the topic "Child Growth and Behavior," with a discussion period following. Everybody was welcome. I wanted to hear and talk to Dr. Baldwin, for my one-year old son had already developed a decided trend toward independent thinking.

"Dr. Baldwin," I said, "I'm doing the same thing for my young child as I did for my older one. His environment

is exactly the same but his response is totally different."

"The environment couldn't be the same," Dr. Baldwin pointed out. "Your older child had a father and mother in his environment. Your young son has father, mother, and an older sister."

It was as simple as that! The scales slid from my eyes. "Child study" was my answer. But what was this meeting? How could I join such a group? I found out that the child-study meeting (it was not called parent education then) was a part of the P.T.A.! By the next year a P.T.A. was organized in Colfax, and like the proverbial hack driver who found his rut and followed it for forty years, I've been an active P.T.A. member ever since! The wearisome trip to Des Moines was a half day well spent.

—MRS. O. S. FATLAND, *Vice-president*

## THE EVER OPEN DOOR

The fine example of parents who shouldered community responsibilities and who were personal friends of my teachers laid a firm foundation for my own parent-teacher work. Then, too, as a teacher, I learned the need for the cooperation and friendship of parents in order to do my work adequately.

I had expected to be a fairly good mother, but parenthood brought baffling problems I had not anticipated. I needed to know more about children's needs. The rather stilted psychology of my day answered neither my questions nor those of my children. So I entered the P.T.A. through the door of parent education—the door our Founders opened to parents in 1897, the door that will always be open to admit thoughtful parents.

I'll also confess to the selfish motive of wanting to know and to be with teachers whose activities paralleled mine. Another influence was my family, whose interest and encouragement were most generous.



• Mrs. Walker at home.

In the P.T.A. I saw an organization whose very name invites parents and teachers to partnership. That relationship alone would be good for our children, I knew. At first I didn't realize that the love and security we give our children must be re-enforced by knowledge and understanding of problems that are community-wide. But I soon learned that children are educated by all who touch their lives—that no child can be safe until all children are protected.

Thus I became involved in common problems and in programs working toward better homes, schools, and communities. From the seed of concern for my children flowered concern for all children everywhere.

—MRS. EDWARD T. WALKER, *Vice-president*

## STARTING IN HIGH

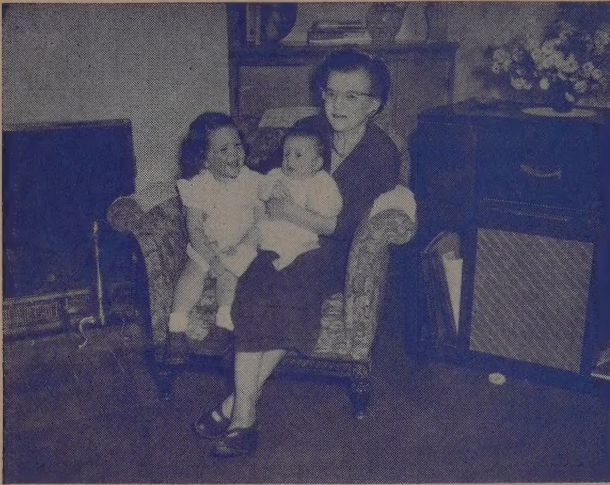
If you can imagine anything as irregular as assuming the presidency of a P.T.A. before becoming an accredited member, then you have my story.

Although the association in our community was organized in 1920, it was not until seven years later that I really became aware of it. That September of 1927 our boy entered school!

Shortly afterward the P.T.A. president, a minister who was about to leave for another pastoral charge, called to ask if I would take his place in the P.T.A. So far as I know there was no



## WHY WE JOINED THE P.T.A. (Continued)



• Mrs. Otto Eisenstein and grandchildren, Margaret Ellen and John Calvert Eisenstein.

election; I think it was merely a matter of finding someone—a *ny one*—who would be willing to serve. Truly, “ignorance is bliss,” for I had no notion of the president’s responsibilities. Although I had welcomed the opportunity of “raising funds” for needed school equipment, the P.T.A. had no other significance for me at that time.

I recall that membership enrollment (headed by the president) numbered 210 that year. I also recall discussing the disposition of state and national dues with the principal. He said, “We always send them \$5.00. They ought to be satisfied with that.” I was soon to realize how inadequate that amount was to help finance the valuable services that the state and national congresses give to the local units.

Before long materials prepared by the state and national officers arrived. The new president read them. They created an exhilarating awareness of the tremendous possibilities lying dormant within her own unit. Soon a parent education group was organized. Committees and members responded enthusiastically to an accelerated, intensified program. Steadily and surely the importance and usefulness of the P.T.A. to the school and community increased.

My membership has remained in this, my favorite unit, with the challenge of service to children always stimulating new and greater efforts. Progress through the years will enable our grandchildren to live in an era of better homes, better schools, and better communities.

—MRS. OTTO EISENSTEIN, *Vice-president*



• The Heylmuns and their son Billy at the time Mrs. Heylmun served as president of the P.T.A. she tells about.

### PRESCHOOL PATHS TO THE P.T.A.

My interest in parent-teacher work started long before my oldest son entered the first grade. It was stimulated first, I think, by our town health nurse, and it was fostered by our annual town meetings, which bring school and other civic problems close to the people.

In the thirties our town had no resident pediatrician. For weighing our babies and for their general checkups, we had to depend on well-baby conferences, held weekly in our town hall. From time to time our health nurse arranged for speakers on nutrition, baby care, and similar topics, and cordially invited every mother to attend these special get-togethers, which were held in the elementary school.

From our interest in child care it was a natural and easy step to concern for our schools. We discussed school finances, school housing, hot lunches at school, and similar problems at our annual town meetings. There every voter has an opportunity to take an active part in civic affairs.

Thus we were well oriented for parent-teacher work when our children entered school. Almost automatically we joined the P.T.A., and soon we were serving on various committees.

Looking back, I can see how deeply indebted our town is to Mrs. Harriet Harbig, the health nurse, whose infectious interest in the welfare of all children in the community was a beacon guiding parents to P.T.A. work.

—MRS. S. THEODORE MANDUCA, *Vice-president*

### FROM COMMUNITY NEED— A CHARTER MEMBER

I was not a parent when I first became a P.T.A. member. I was a teacher, however, and my concern was for all the children of the community in which I lived.

It was a small community built around a large industry. To it had come families of many nationalities—American, Polish, Italian, Serbian, and others. Foreign languages were spoken in many homes and churches. Cultural, social, and economic differences created barriers. There was great need for an organization to unite the diverse groups in a common effort to improve conditions for children. Some of us believed a P.T.A. was the answer to our need, for it was an organization in which all could meet on the common ground of their interest in children. So in 1925 I helped to organize the first P.T.A. in the unit school system in this town in Illinois.

The call to the organizational meeting brought a heartening response. Mothers, fathers, and other interested citizens came. Officials and laborers from the industry were there, as well as business men and their employees. Almost at once the P.T.A. became the most important and valuable of our community organizations.

It plunged immediately into its work. Study groups were organized and were of primary importance. Mothers who spoke not a word of English came to them, but their desire to learn to be better parents overcame the language difficulty.

My P.T.A. work thus began with charter membership in a much needed unit, of which I later became president.

—MRS. J. W. HEYLMUN, *Vice-president*



## ROGER RECRUITS

Six-year-old Roger sat at the table, ignoring his lunch. Something was troubling him. He hunched his shoulders miserably.

"Mommy, please say yes. I can't eat—I'm not going back to school till you say yes. I told teacher you would."

"Would what, Roggie?"

"Be room mother for the P.T.A. Teacher wants you. Bobbie's mother and Richie's and Barbara's mother said so, but I said you would. Please!" Roger's eyes were bright with anxious, unshed tears.

Baby Phyllis gleefully banged the table with her spoon. It was almost as if she knew there would be extra outings in her stroller if her mother called on the mothers of Roger's classmates, inviting them to join the P.T.A. and to come to meetings.

I pondered. Here was an opportunity to become acquainted with the parents of Roger's classmates, I thought. Then, there were the wonderful P.T.A. study groups I had heard about, where parents discussed their problems. There was the proposed school foundation bill that Phyllis needed to provide better financing for our schools, and there were all the other school problems Roger's father and I were reading about. Perhaps through the P.T.A. I would learn more about them—perhaps even be able to help solve some of them.

"I'd love to be the class mother, Roger," I said.

Roger beamed. His lunch disappeared rapidly and he trotted off to school, a happy little boy.

Soon a call came from the principal, who had been a teacher of mine when I attended the same school. Very carefully she explained the school foundation bill and described the material that room mothers would distribute and explain to the voters. This was my introduction to home-school cooperation for the welfare of children.

Thus Roger brought the P.T.A. into our home, and he says he has lived with it ever since—very happily, I'm sure.

—MRS. RUSSELL C. BICKEL, *Secretary*

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## CARNIVAL AND CANDLELIGHT

It all began with hot dogs, but candlelight illumined the way.

My older son, Tom, was a very young pupil in the Augusta Circle Elementary School in Greenville, South Carolina. Sometime in October he joyously reported that a P.T.A.-sponsored Halloween Carnival would be held at the school. His father and I were implored to attend. Our presence and his own, naturally, were absolutely necessary to the venture's success.

My recruitment as a hot-dog committee member came shortly. It was an important job, too, for we often sold

as many as 700 hot dogs at those early carnivals.

During the carnival I renewed my friendship with a girlhood acquaintance whom I had not seen for years. She asked me to help with a Founders Day program to be presented in February. It was in preparation for that Founders Day candlelight ceremony that I first learned something of the parent-teacher movement's beginning, of its high purposes, and of its past and potential significance for children and youth.

Tom is a college senior now and my younger son, Frank, entered college in September. But my parent-teacher interest grows ever greater. Life is richer because I am part of a great caring, working organization, which I discovered through the humble means of hot dogs and candlelight.

—MRS. T. J. MIMS, *Vice-president*

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## P.T.A. PERSPECTIVE

My first experience with parent-teacher work was in 1923 when I helped to organize a unit in a small town in South Dakota. Both parents and teachers wanted a P.T.A. because they knew it would help them to provide more wholesome community activities for children and youth and also to get better understanding of the work of the school. That unit is still flourishing, and members



• Mrs. Bickel and her children, Phyllis and Roger.



• The Mims and their two sons.



## WHY WE JOINED THE P.T.A. (Continued)

continue to show a lively interest in parent-teacher work—local, state, and national.

Ever since then, with the exception of a four-year period, I have been an active P.T.A. member. That gap was due to a superintendent's opposition to parent-teacher groups in the community where I lived. As soon as he retired an association was formed, and it too is still thriving.

The experience of serving our organization at local, state, and national levels has given me a perspective on educational problems as they affect both children and adults. The energy with which parent-teacher groups attack these problems is always inspiring. That P.T.A. workers believe in purposeful action cannot be debated. Moreover, that action is effective.

Of all the organizations of which I have been a member, the P.T.A. stands out as the one most nearly able to guarantee that America's children, now and in the future, will have the full opportunities they deserve and require. And as a result the nation and the world will be a better place in which to live.

—JOHN W. HEADLEY, *Treasurer*

### FRIENDSHIP WAS THE SPUR

I became a P.T.A. member before I had even attended a single meeting! One morning, away back in 1928, I answered my telephone to hear a friend say, "You are now a member of the Grant Preschool Parent-Teacher Association. I paid your dues at the meeting last evening so you'd be sure to attend with me. Won't you plan now to go with me to next month's meeting?"

I knew little about parent-teacher associations for our daughter was less than two years old. But since my friend was so enthusiastic and so eager for me to attend, I promised to go with her. Little did either of us realize how that membership was to change the pattern of my life!

That first meeting was so interesting and the members, all young mothers like myself, were so friendly that I attended regularly, and soon I was taking part in the activities. There has never been a year since that time when I have not been a member of a P.T.A. Working with the dedicated, unselfish persons who are to be found in every parent-teacher association, I have had some of the most satisfying experiences in my

life. I know that the time will come when I can no longer take an active part, but I am sure the day will never dawn when I shall lose interest in the program or my desire to lend my support through the annual payment of my dues.

—MRS. HERMAN NORDFORS, *Vice-president*

### SHARED EXPERIENCES

On returning from the Army after the First World War, I became, all at one time, a superintendent, a principal, and a teacher in the Shellman, Georgia, schools. It was early in that period that a parent said to me, "I'm sending my children to school so they'll know enough not to have to work!" Then and there I realized the importance of bringing parents to a closer understanding of the purposes and activities of the school. So during my three years at Shellman parents met together regularly at the school. In these informal meetings they not only talked about the needs and interests of school and community but devoted themselves to practical efforts for improving both.

Later, while working toward an advanced degree at Columbia University, I became aware of the purposes and program of the National Congress of Parents and Teachers. Here, I realized, was an organization that answered not only to my needs but to those of every school and community. I envisioned a rich educational growth throughout America as a result of parents and teachers sharing their experiences with others over the nation.

My own faith in education as a means of guiding each person to the good life must have always been deeply rooted. I still chuckle over the remark of my son, Knox, Jr., when he was just a little fellow. (He is now a medical student.) He was telling a neighbor that we were going to move to Atlanta. "But," he said, "moving won't be so hard. We don't have anything much in our house to move but books."

With the poet Andrew Lang I agree that a man is rich "whose house is full of books and whose garden is full of

flowers." But richer still is the man who finds time each day to read his books and cultivate his flowers.

And through the educational advances for which the P.T.A. works continuously it is my hope that we shall have more and more men and women whose lives are filled with such richness.

—KNOX WALKER, *Second Vice-president*

### ORACLE OF THE P.T.A.

A few weeks before my older child entered school a relative who was principal of a school in another part of the city announced firmly, "There is a P.T.A. at the Vine Street School. You must join and you must participate. It is an important part of your children's education." Until that moment I had never heard of a parent-teacher association, and the whole thing sounded pretty dull. Remembering my own school experience, I had assumed that my husband and I would meet the teachers as the youngsters progressed and attend an occasional school program and have no more than a speaking acquaintance with the administrator, as long as our offspring were not troublesome.

Habits formed in childhood are not easily broken, however—particularly habits of respect for a principal's opinion and authority in matters relating to education. The oracle had spoken. I attended the first P.T.A. meeting of the year, and my worst fears were justified. A Spartan sense of duty took me back the next month. One of those interminable discussions developed, involving solution of a problem about which few facts seemed known. Out of sympathy for the presiding officer, and fully aware of the risk, I asked questions and inevitably became a committee of one to get the answers. That fortunate assignment brought me into close association with the unit president, who had a clear conception of the meaning and strength of the parent-teacher idea. Her enthusiasm was infectious. She kept me busy until the virus had taken, and I have never recovered.

—MRS. ROLLIN BROWN, *First Vice-president*